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SUBJECT: JUNE 16 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: USS JOHN MCCAIN, KIM JONG-IL
SONS, UNSCR 1874

1. Key points at the June 16 MFA press briefing:

-- China had "taken note" of media reports regarding a June 11th collision between a Chinese submarine and a sonar array trailed by the destroyer USS John McCain.

-- The spokesperson said China was "not aware of the relevant situation" when asked about reports indicating that Kim Jong-il's son Kim Jong-un had recently visited Beijing.

-- UN Security Council Resolution 1874 "had explicit provisions" and, China, "like other parties would earnestly implement the resolution."

-- China "firmly opposed the accusations" made by a U.S. Department of State spokesperson regarding China's efforts to protect the rights of laborers.

Chinese Submarine Collision with Sonar Array

2. China had "taken note" of media reports regarding a June 11th collision between a Chinese submarine and a sonar array trailed by the destroyer USS John McCain, said spokesperson Qin Gang at the June 16 regular MFA press briefing. Qin said that the submarine "accidentally collided" with the sonar array the while conducting "normal exercises." He added the MFA had not received a report detailing the situation.

Activities of Kim Jong-il Sons in China

3. Asked repeatedly to confirm reports indicating that Kim Jong-il's son Kim Jong-un had recently visited Beijing and met with Hu Jintao and other leaders, Qin consistently responded, "We are not aware of the relevant situation." The same answer was given to follow-up questions asking whether Kim Jong-il's eldest son Kim Jong-nan had suffered an attempted assassination attempt in China.

UNSCR 1874 and Six-Party Talks

4. UN Security Council Resolution 1874 "had explicit provisions" and, China, "like other parties would earnestly implement the resolution," said the spokesperson when asked whether China was willing to search North Korean ships. China also hoped that relevant parties would remain calm and restrained, use dialogue and refrain from actions that could cause the situation on the Korean Peninsula to deteriorate. Asked why China had not called for a resumption of the Six-Party Talks recently, the spokesperson responded that the issue "can only be solved through dialogue and political means." China was ready to work with all parties to promote a peaceful resolution, said Qin.

Chinese Labor Practices

¶15. China "firmly opposed the accusations" made by a U.S. Department of State spokesperson regarding China's efforts to protect the rights of laborers. "China attached great importance to protecting the rights of laborers," said Qin. Qin listed minimum wage, child labor and discrimination regulations that had been put in place to protect laborers. Following the start of the financial crisis, China took measures to stimulate the economy and increase consumption which would ultimately help workers. China was still a developing country and might "lag behind" some developed countries on labor rights, admitted Qin. However "plausible and reasonable" the State Department spokesperson's comments might seem, said Qin, it was important to remember where the financial crisis started. Qin asked rhetorically what the State Department spokesperson would say to the many innocent workers and countries who were victims of the financial crisis. "If you make a mistake, you should stop pointing fingers at others," said Qin.

April Decline in China purchase of U.S. Treasury Bills

¶16. Asked to explain why China's purchase of U.S. Treasury Bills decreased in April and whether this reflected declined confidence in the U.S. Dollar, Qin replied that China's foreign reserve was operated according to the principles of "security, liquidity, and good value, in accordance to need." The timing and quantity of T-Bill purchases were based on those principles, and specific questions should be referred to "relevant authorities."

Iran Election and unrest

BEIJING 00001626 002 OF 002

¶17. Asked about the recent election and unrest in Iran, Qin responded that China hoped the "solidarity and stability" of the country could be maintained.

EU acceptance of Chinese terrorist suspects

¶18. In response to a question about EU countries accepting Chinese citizen Guantanamo Bay detainees, Qin stated that China "firmly opposed" transferring Chinese "terrorist suspects" to any third country.

Additional Indian Military Planes on Border

¶19. Qin was "unaware" of reports that India had deployed military planes to regions bordering China. Developing a "comprehensive strategic partnership" and promoting "good neighborliness" with India was the "mutual consensus" reached by the two governments and was the "aspiration of the two peoples." China's position on border related issues was "consistent and clear." Qin expressed hope that the two sides could work together to implement their "consensus" and safeguard peace and tranquility to create proper conditions for a "proper and reasonable settlement" of their border issues and development of bilateral relations.

Visits

¶10. Turkish President Abdullah Gul planned to visit China from June 24-29. China's envoy to the Middle East Wu Sike would visit Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Russia from June 20 to July 4. Asked whether the North Korean Defense Minister visited China recently, Qin said that China and North Korea continued to have people to people exchanges and referred reporters to the Chinese Ministry of Defense.

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